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| Author(s)     | Hashimoto, Yorimitsu  |
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# **Marine Vessel and Road as a Socializing Vehicle: Enroute Experiences, Transnational Encounters and Exchanges**

**HASHIMOTO Yorimitsu**

Maritime ship, whether mercantile or military, have been considered as a metaphor or miniature of a society. Multi-layered and multi-cultural passengers, even if nearly segregated according to the economic status or tracking system, are supposed to form a community bound together by common destiny or destination. In the literature, films and paintings, a marine vessel has been represented as a positive example of meritocracy: no matter how diversified it looks, it is to be hierarchically integrated and organized by a chain of command. Otherwise it would be turned out to be the ship of fools. It is hardly surprising, therefore, the stories concerning warship and civilian ship has increased with the rise of the nation-state and the national consciousness.

Meanwhile its socializing process on board have been nearly ignored although a number of travelogues has described the unexpected encounters, experiences and troubles on the maritime road. Cabins are strictly classified but the passenger's identities would not be static and its category system of the ship usually would mold, cross and re-draw the borders of race, class and gender of his or her own society after they left behind. It is not uncommon that impoverished workers or farmers would develop the class and national consciousness including racism after they travelled in international steerage. Ports of call also formed and revised the traveler's view of the world. Many Japanese tourists, on their way to Europe and America for study or business, had been impressed by the culture and people of the port of call. Their impression of China often depends on the observations in Shanghai and Hong Kong, and their image of India was exclusively based on their brief stay in Colombo. So the following four papers are going to emphasize the importance

of enroute experiences of the marine road, transnational encounters and exchanges on the vessel.

Firstly, Hashimoto's "On the Marine Road: Anglo-Japanese Encounters and Exchanges in Modern Maritime Culture" discusses how Japanese maritime culture has almost been designed to overwrite or rewrite British maritime legacy. The sea (and sea routes) as a multilayered contact and conflict zone is sharply articulated by Yanagi Yukinori's art work "Pacific-Shattered Blue" (1997), a collage of debris-like fragments of photographs dimly showing ships sunk during the Pacific War on an upside-down map of the Pacific Ocean (see this paper for details of the map). Maritime maps and maritime literature have also been open to revision. For example, Japan's sea lanes have literally been laid out to reverse or avoid the British maritime travel routes. These sea courses, including the ports of call, unconsciously colored the worldview of first-class passengers and immigrants alike, leaving behind numerous travelogues and novels. Aspiring writers attempted to create a *Treasure Island*-like national novel but failed to produce popular shipboard romances. Taking an overview of Japanese trials and errors in bootlegging British maritime culture, this paper suggests that the social conditions tended to limit Japan's maritime literature.

Secondly Inaga's "Under the Shadow of Apartheid: Maritime Road of Transnational Communication" uncovers the unexpected encounter with the background of racial discrimination in Cape Town. William Plomer (1903-1973) and Laurens Van der Post (1906-1996) came to Japan in 1929 via maritime route, crossing the Arabic and Indian Ocean under the command of Captain Mori Katsue (1890-1989) of the Osaka Commercial Line. Not only the way they encountered Mori in Durban, under the heavy burden of Apartheid, but also their stay and experience in Pre-War Japan are rich in relevant anecdotes in cross cultural mutual understanding between Africa and East Asia. To the two topics interests in comparative literary studies, the paper also adds two others factors. One is the experience of the ship navigation crossing the Oceans. The other is the byproduct of their discovery. While William Plomer took interest in Japanese mediaeval theater Noh and collaborated with Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), Van der Post's learning of the Japanese language and his familiarity with the mentality helped him survive in the camp of the Prisoners

of War in Java. By referring mainly to *Yet Being Someone Other* (1982), the paper will investigate into the significance of transnational navigation touching upon the maritime imagination.

Thirdly Negawa's "Crossing "Manchukuo" and Brazil: Immigration Ships as Contact zones" examines the exchange between "Manchukuo", a kind of Japanese version of British Commonwealth, and Brazil. Negawa also considers an immigration ship's networking of the countries / regions globally as a contact zone where people, goods, animals and plants cross over. In this paper, he focuses on the exchanges of animals and plants among Japan, Manchuria and Brazil via Japanese immigration ships to Brazil. Flora and fauna exchanges, Japanese cherry, for instance, Manchurian animals and Brazilian orchids, emerged around 1940. Closely analyzing materials in Japanese in the period just before the Pacific War would clarify the political background and meaning of the crossing between Imperial Japan and Brazil.

Finally, Garasino's "Navigating Between the West and the Rest: East Asia's modern Experience in the Works of Enrique Gomez Carrillo (1904-1907)" gives another perspective from South America, examining how South American people looked and experienced at the same maritime road. This paper discusses the writings of the literary critic, journalist and travel literature author Enrique Gomez Carrillo (1873-1927) on East Asia and Japan at the closing and the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War (1905-1907). Focusing on maritime travel, both as a narrative resource and as an actual means of mobility in transnational intellectual encounters, this paper illustrates one example of the impact of Japan's modern experience on the Latin American intellectual sphere at the beginning of the twentieth century. In doing so, it will analyze how Carrillo attempted to challenge and decenter hierarchical divisions of West and East.

With the following papers, we aim to emphasize the importance of marine vessel and road as a socializing vehicle. It would lead to rediscovery of nearly forgotten travel writing as a maritime literature and reinterpretation of the novels apparently describing maritime ship as a metaphor of a society.